

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) A computer system comprising:
 - a processor;
 - a memory coupled to the processor, the memory storing a pre-selected input characteristic;
 - a stored password;
 - instructions causing a system boot or reboot not to be halted during a POST procedure, by an unauthorized user, by adding a timeout to the password;
 - instructions causing the processor to compare a first input entered by the user to the pre-selected input characteristic;
 - instructions causing the processor to ignore an input during a power-on self test procedure unless the first input matches the pre-selected input characteristic;
 - instructions causing the processor to prompt a user of the computer system for a password when the first input matches the pre-selected input characteristic;
 - instructions causing the processor to compare a password entered by the user to the stored password; and
 - instructions causing the processor to process inputs during the power-on self test procedure subsequent to the first input when the password entered by the user matches the stored password.
2. (Cancelled).

3. (Original) The computer system of claim 1 wherein:
the data corresponds to a keystroke on a keyboard.
4. (Original) The computer system of claim 3 wherein:
the data corresponds to an F2 key.
5. (Original) The computer system of claim 1 wherein:
the processing of inputs other than the first input enables the user to
access a system setup procedure.
6. (Original) The computer system of claim 1 wherein:
the processing of inputs other than the first input enables the user to
request boot functions.
7. (Original) The computer system of claim 1 wherein:
the processing of inputs other than the first input enables the user to
reboot the computer system.
8. (Original) The computer system of claim 1 wherein:
the processing of inputs other than the first input enables the user to
switch off a power supply of the computer system.
9. (Original) The computer system of claim 1 wherein:
the processing of inputs other than the first input enables the user to
access an Option Read Only Memory utility.
10. (Original) The computer system of claim 1 wherein:
the processing of inputs other than the first input enables the user to
halt a power-on self test function.

11. (Original) The computer system of claim 1 wherein:
the processing of inputs other than the first input enables the user to omit a power-on self test function.
12. (Currently Amended) A method of operating a computer system comprising:
ignoring all inputs from an input/output device during a power-on self test procedure except a pre-specified input;
upon detection of the pre-specified input, prompting a user for a password;
causing a system boot or reboot not to be halted during a POST procedure, by an unauthorized user, by adding a timeout to the password;
comparing the password entered by the user in response to the prompting to a previously-stored password; and
processing inputs other than the pre-specified input during the power-on self-test procedure if and only if the password entered by the user matches the previously-stored password.
13. (Cancelled).
14. (Original) The method of claim 12 wherein:
the pre-specified input is generated by a keystroke on a keyboard.
15. (Original) The method of claim 14 wherein:
the keystroke is a pressing of an F2 key.
16. (Original) The method of claim 12 wherein:
the processing gives a user access to a system setup procedure.

17. (Original) The method of claim 12 wherein:
the processing gives a user an ability to request boot functions.
18. (Original) The method of claim 12 wherein:
the processing gives a user an ability to reboot the computer system.
19. (Original) The method of claim 12 wherein:
the processing gives a user an ability to switch off a power supply of
the computer system.
20. (Original) The method of claim 12 wherein:
the processing gives a user an ability to access an Option Read Only
Memory utility.
21. (Original) The method of claim 12 wherein:
the processing gives a user an ability to halt a power-on self test
function.
22. (Original) The method of claim 12 wherein:
the processing gives a user an ability to omit a power-on self test
function.
23. (Currently Amended) A computer program product comprising a storage
medium storing data and instructions operable to:
mask all inputs from an input/output device during a power-on self test
procedure, except at least one input that corresponds to predetermined data;
upon reception of an input that corresponds to the predetermined data,
transmit a prompt for a password;

cause a system boot or reboot not to be halted during a POST procedure, by an unauthorized user, by adding a timeout to the password;

compare a the password received from the input/output device to a qualified password; and

if the received password conforms to the qualified password, accept and respond to other inputs from an input/output device during the power-on self test procedure.

24. (Original) The computer program product of claim 23 wherein:
 - the masking masks from a processor the inputs from an input/output device during power-on self test; and
 - the reception of the input that corresponds to the predetermined data is performed by the processor.
25. (Cancelled).
26. (Original) The computer program product of claim 23 wherein:
 - the accepting and responding to other inputs enables the user to access a system setup procedure.
27. (Original) The computer program product of claim 23 wherein:
 - the accepting and responding to other inputs enables the user to request boot functions.
28. (Original) The computer program product of claim 23 wherein:
 - the accepting and responding to other inputs enables the user to reboot the computer system.

29. (Original) The computer program product of claim 23 wherein:
the accepting and responding to other inputs enables the user to
switch off a power supply of the computer system.
30. (Original) The computer program product of claim 23 wherein:
the accepting and responding to other inputs enables the user to
access an Option Read Only Memory utility.
31. (Original) The computer program product of claim 23 wherein:
the accepting and responding to other inputs enables the user to halt a
power-on self test function.
32. (Original) The computer program product of claim 23 wherein:
the accepting and responding to other inputs enables the user to omit
a power-on self test function.